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Tuna Newsletter

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U.S. TUNA STATISTICS

Editor's note: The following articles were prepared by NMFS personnel from data and information gathered from sources in the U.S. tuna industry. (A. Jackson)

U.S. CANNED TUNA INDUSTRY HIGHLIGHTS, FIRST QUARTER 1991

Total receipts of tuna by U.S. canners during the first quarter of 1991 (January-March) decreased by 9% to 91,200 short tons (st) compared to the first quarter 1990 (Table 1). Receipts in California and American Samoa were up by 27%, while receipts in Puerto Rico were down by 36%. Domestically-caught deliveries to canneries in Puerto Rico were down by 84%, largely a result of a reduction in the size of the U.S. tropical tuna purse seine fleet in the eastern Pacific. Thirty U.S. purse seiners were active in the eastern Pacific at the end of the first

Table 1. U.S. cannery receipts (st) of domestic and imported tuna by species for the first quarters of 1990, 1991 and the recent (1986-90) first quarter averages. Totals may not add due to rounding.

	SPECIES	Albacore	Skipjack	Yellowfin[1]	TOTAL
		AMERICAN SAMOA & CALIFORNIA			
1990	DOMESTIC	2,700	17,800	9,900	30,400
	IMPORTED	4,600	6,000	2,000	12,600
	TOTAL	7,300	23,900	11,900	43,000
1991	DOMESTIC	3,100	24,900	8,500	36,500
	IMPORTED	7,800	8,500	1,700	17,900
	TOTAL	10,900	33,300	10,200	54,400
1986-90 Average	DOMESTIC	1,200	18,500	10,900	30,600
	IMPORTED	6,300	7,300	3,700	17,300
	TOTAL	7,500	25,800	14,700	47,900
		PUERTO RICO			
1990	DOMESTIC	*	2,500	13,200	15,700
	IMPORTED	20,200	11,900	9,700	41,900
	TOTAL	20,300	14,400	23,000	57,600
1991	DOMESTIC	*	1,400	1,100	2,500
	IMPORTED	5,100	16,800	12,400	34,300
	TOTAL	5,100	18,200	13,500	36,800
1986-90 Average	DOMESTIC	*	2,900	17,100	20,000
	IMPORTED	18,100	17,600	13,300	49,100
	TOTAL	18,100	20,500	30,400	69,100
		TOTAL			
1990	DOMESTIC	2,700	20,300	23,100	46,100
	IMPORTED	24,900	18,000	11,700	54,600
	TOTAL	27,600	38,300	34,800	100,700
1991	DOMESTIC	3,100	26,200	9,600	39,000
	IMPORTED	12,900	25,300	14,000	52,200
	TOTAL	16,000	51,500	23,600	91,200
1986-90 Average	DOMESTIC	1,200	21,400	28,000	50,600
	IMPORTED	24,400	24,900	17,000	66,400
	TOTAL	25,700	46,300	45,100	117,000

*Less than 100 st reported for this category.
[1]May include a small amount of bigeye tuna.

Table 2. U.S. cannery imports (st) of tuna by species[1] and flag of catcher vessel for the first quarter of 1991. Totals for the first quarter of 1990 are given for comparison. Note that the flag of the catcher vessel does not necessarily reflect the country of export or point of shipment. Totals may not add due to rounding.

COUNTRY	1991				1990
	ALB	SKJ	YFT[2]	TOTAL	TOTAL
ECUADOR	0	1,100	1,300	2,500	4,100
FRANCE	*	3,000	3,600	6,500	2,800
GHANA	0	2,700	2,000	4,700	5,500
JAPAN	1,100	400	400	2,000	3,600
MALTA	0	1,100	400	1,500	0
PANAMA	500	1,200	600	2,400	1,500
PORTUGAL	1,500	0	0	1,500	400
SOUTH KOREA	2,000	3,900	900	6,800	4,100
SPAIN	0	7,600	1,900	9,500	600
TAIWAN	7,300	1,800	500	9,700	18,700
USA	0	300	600	900	0
VANUATU	0	800	700	1,400	2,200
VENEZUELA	0	400	800	1,100	3,300
OTHER	300	1,000	300	1,700	4,500
UNKNOWN	0	0	0	0	3,100
TOTAL (AS RECEIVED)	12,900	25,300	14,000	52,200	54,600
TOTAL (ESTIMATED RND WT)[3]	15,800	32,400	14,900	63,200	59,700

*Less than 100 st reported for this category.

[1]ALB=albacore; SKJ=skipjack; YFT=yellowfin.

[2]May include a small amount of bigeye tuna.

[3]Converted to round weight by using factors of 1.11 for gilled and gutted, 1.25 for dressed, 1.3 for headless and 2.25 for loins.

Table 3. Receipts (st) of tuna by U.S. canneries by species[1] and area of capture for the first quarters of 1990 and 1991. Totals may not add due to rounding.

SOURCE	1990			1991		
	ALB	SKJ	YFT[2]	ALB	SKJ	YFT[2]
E. ATLANTIC OCEAN						
DOMESTIC	0	0	0	0	0	0
IMPORTED	11,300	3,900	2,300	3,800	15,100	6,800
TOTAL	11,300	3,900	2,300	3,800	15,100	6,800
W. ATLANTIC OCEAN						
DOMESTIC	0	0	0	*	0	0
IMPORTED	2,000	2,100	100	1,300	0	100
TOTAL	2,000	2,100	100	1,300	0	100
E. PACIFIC OCEAN						
DOMESTIC	*	2,500	16,600	0	3,400	3,300
IMPORTED	0	4,000	6,600	0	1,700	2,300
TOTAL	0	6,500	23,200	0	5,100	5,600
W. PACIFIC OCEAN						
DOMESTIC	2,700	17,700	6,500	3,100	22,900	6,300
IMPORTED	6,200	6,000	2,000	6,800	6,600	1,700
TOTAL	8,900	23,800	8,500	9,900	29,500	7,900
INDIAN OCEAN						
DOMESTIC	0	0	0	0	0	0
IMPORTED	5,300	2,000	800	1,000	1,900	3,200
TOTAL	5,300	2,000	800	1,000	1,900	3,200

*Less than 100 st reported for this category.

[1]ALB=albacore; SKJ=skipjack; YFT=yellowfin.

[2]May include a small amount of bigeye tuna.

quarter of 1990 compared to only 12 in 1991. Skipjack tuna was the principal component of all domestic deliveries at 26,200 st, followed by yellowfin (9,600 st) and albacore (3,100 st). Imports led domestic deliveries with 57% of the total. Skipjack was the leading import at 25,300 st, followed by yellowfin (14,000 st) and albacore (12,900 st). The leading non-U.S. suppliers were Taiwan and Spain, each with about 18% of the import market, followed by South Korea and France with 13% and 12% of the market, respectively (Table 2). The western Pacific Ocean was the main source of all three important tuna species in U.S. cannery receipts: skipjack (29,500 st), albacore (9,900 st) and yellowfin (7,900 Table 3). The vast majority of tuna receipts by U.S. canners are of whole fish (round). However, some quantity of tuna is received gilled and gutted, dressed, headless, or as loins. After conversion to round weight, U.S. cannery receipts for the first quarter of 1991 totaled 103,300 st, down 3% from the 1990 first quarter total (Table 4).

Contract prices for domestically caught tuna delivered to U.S. canners in American Samoa were substantially higher than first quarter 1990 prices for all size categories of fish except for yellowfin weighing over 20 pounds which showed an 8% price decrease to $985 per st. No contract prices exist for domestic deliveries to Puerto Rico for first quarter 1991. (Table 5). U.S. imports of canned tuna packed in water totaled 58,100 st for the first quarter of 1991, up 6% from the first quarter 1990 total.

U.S. TUNA FISHERIES UPDATE

EASTERN PACIFIC PURSE SEINE FISHERY

During the period January through June 1991, 15 U.S. purse seiners caught an estimated 11,500 metric tons (mt) of yellowfin tuna and

Table 4. Total U.S. cannery receipts (st) by classification of tuna as received by packers for the first quarters of 1990 and 1991. Totals may not add due to rounding.

	SPECIES	Albacore	Skipjack	Yellowfin[1]	TOTAL
1990	ROUND	27,600	34,900	32,700	95,200
	GILLED & GUTTED	0	0	1,100	1,100
	DRESSED	0	0	0	0
	LOIN	*	3,400	1,000	4,300
	HEADLESS	0	0	0	0
	TOTAL (AS RECEIVED)	27,600	38,300	34,800	100,700
	TOTAL (ESTIMATED ROUND WT)[2]	27,600	42,500	36,200	106,200
1991	ROUND	13,600	45,500	21,600	80,700
	GILLED & GUTTED	0	0	800	800
	DRESSED	0	0	0	0
	LOIN	2,400	6,000	1,200	9,600
	HEADLESS	*	0	0	*
	TOTAL (AS RECEIVED)	16,000	51,500	23,600	91,200
	TOTAL (ESTIMATED ROUND WT)[2]	19,000	59,100	25,200	103,300

*Less than 100 st reported for this category.

[1]May include a small amount of bigeye tuna.

[2]Converted to round weight by using factors of 1.11 for gilled and gutted, 1.25 for dressed, 1.3 for headless and 2.25 for loins.

Table 5. Contract prices (U.S. $ per st) for skipjack and yellowfin tuna for delivery to U.S. canneries in American Samoa and Puerto Rico by U.S. vessels arriving from trips in first quarter 1990 and 1991.

SIZE CLASS (lbs.)	SKIPJACK		YELLOWFIN	
	1990	1991	1990	1991
American Samoa				
<3	350	420-460	350	420-460
3 to 4	570	620-660	570	620-660
4 to 7.5	775	820-855	775	820-855
7.5 to 20	860	895-920	885	910-930
>20	—	—	1,075	985
Puerto Rico				
<3	350	*	350	*
3 to 4	570	*	570	*
4 to 7.5	775	*	775	*
7.5 to 20	860	*	885	*
>20	—	—	1,075	*

*No contract prices exist for first quarter 1991 for deliveries in Puerto Rico.

5,400 mt of skipjack tuna in the eastern tropical Pacific (Figure 1). The yellowfin catch was down 68% from the 1990 catch (36,500 mt) for the same period, and the skipjack catch was down 30% from the 1990 catch (7,700 mt). The smaller catches in 1991 are largely the result of a reduction in the size of the U.S. fleet.

At the end of June 1991, the number of active U.S. purse seiners in the eastern Pacific stood at 11 compared to 19 for the same period of 1990. U.S. canners' policy of not purchasing tuna caught in association with dolphins is the primary cause for this reduction in the U.S. fleet.

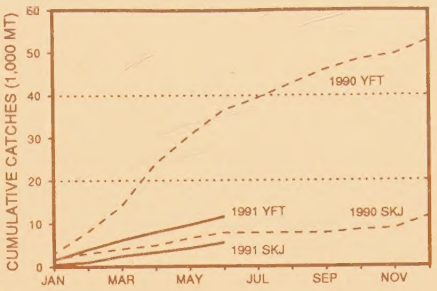

Figure 1. Cumulative tuna catches, by month, for the U.S. eastern Pacific purse seine fishery, 1990 and 1991.

WESTERN PACIFIC PURSE SEINE FISHERY

During the period January through May 1991, 38 U.S. purse seiners landed an estimated 39,900 mt of skipjack tuna and 15,700 mt of yellowfin tuna in the western Pacific (Figure 2). Skipjack landings were down 8% from 1990 landings (43,300 mt) for the same period, and yellowfin landings were down 15% from 1990 landings (18,400 mt).

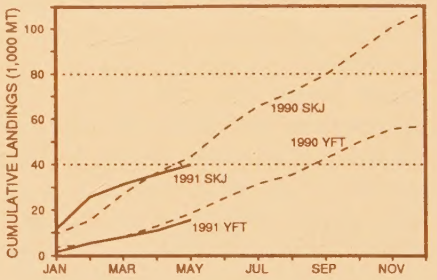

Figure 2. Cumulative tuna landings, by month, for the U.S. western Pacific purse seine fishery, 1990 and 1991.

NORTHERN PACIFIC ALBACORE FISHERY

The 1991 U.S. north Pacific albacore season began the first week of June when six jigboats arrived in the north Pacific, west of the international date line, following the conclusion of the south Pacific albacore season. For the first four weeks of the season, catches were spotty and the fish were fairly small. Approximately 15 jigboats plan to leave Hawaii the first week of July to head out

to traditional mid-north Pacific fishing grounds.

*The **1991 Albacore Tuna Forecast**, prepared by the staff of the Stock Assessment and Fishery Impact Analysis Program (Norman Bartoo, Leader) of the SWFSC and originally issued on May 29, 1991, is reprinted below.*

Summary: The general outlook for the 1991 United States north Pacific albacore fishery is for moderate landings, slightly greater than those in 1990. The availability of albacore should be highest in the waters off the Pacific northwest. Albacore are expected to arrive in Pacific northwest waters in the second half of July. There is a relatively high potential for sportfishing in the waters north of the Columbia River. The availability of albacore along the central and southern California coast is expected to be lower than in northern waters. However, strong northerly winds along coastal northern California in June and July could create favorable oceanographic conditions, increasing the anticipated availability off California. Sportfishing for albacore in the Southern California Bight is expected to be only modest, as in 1990, unless fish move in from offshore regions. There is a higher than average probability that warmwater species will be available to sportfishers in the Bight. These species may include tropical tunas (bigeye, yellowfin and skipjack) and other exotics.

Background: Oceanographic information indicates strong frontal boundaries off Japan which should slow movements of albacore to the east. Sea Surface Temperatures (SST) across the north Pacific are slightly higher than normal and have been so for months. This is particularly true for the northern waters. The result is that the boundary features from Hawaii east are relatively weak resulting in a large area of generally suitable SST's for albacore; however, the northern edge of this zone is shifted several degrees north from average conditions. Along the central U.S. coast, SST's have been higher than normal throughout the winter; however, March storms reduced them to near normal. The absence of storms in April and May is again raising SST's.

Coastal upwelling has been much weaker than normal through the winter into May. Upwelling in April was weaker than average. Increased upwelling will contribute good conditions for albacore along the coast by creating fronts. Continued weak upwelling will contribute to weak frontal development and increases the possibility that albacore will be found closer to shore than normal.

There is no albacore catch information available to date from the central Pacific. Several U.S. jigboats have departed Hawaii and American Samoa for the waters near 180 degrees longitude but have not yet made significant catches. These boats will move with the migrating albacore to the U.S. west coast. Japanese pole-and-line catches of albacore have been small owing primarily to reduced fishing effort because prices of albacore in Japan are depressed. Data from the Japanese winter longline fishery indicate slightly lower catches than in the previous 10 years. Their catches consist of a greater proportion of the sizes of albacore taken in the U.S. fishery than seen in recent years. The bulk of the U.S. catch is normally made up of age 3 and 4 fish, although in 1990 the catch was predominately age 4 and 5 fish.

The National Marine Fisheries Service will not issue biweekly albacore fish bulletins this year because of budgetary constraints.

Fishermen are requested to be on the lookout for tagged albacore. Information on the date, location, and fork length of the tagged fish should be sent to the address on the tag along with the tag. Commercial fishermen are also reminded to fill out a Pacific Albacore Logbook and provide the information to port samplers at landing ports or mail it to one of the addresses listed in the logbook. Logbooks are available from the Western Fishboat Owners, State fisheries agencies, and the NMFS La Jolla Laboratory.

SOUTHERN PACIFIC ALBACORE FISHERY

The 1990-91 U.S. south Pacific albacore season ended the last week of April 1991. The 58 U.S. jigboats that participated in the fishery landed an estimated 5,500 mt of albacore in American Samoa, Fiji, Tahiti and Thailand. The majority of the fish were transshipped at sea.

ATLANTIC BLUEFIN TUNA FISHERY

The U.S. Atlantic bluefin tuna fishery is regulated with an ICCAT annual catch quota of 1,387 mt. As of July 11, the total commercial landings for 1991 stood at 190 mt, virtually unchanged from the 1990 landings (192 mt) for the same period. Peak catches for this fishery are expected in the second half of the year. *(Data provided by Kathi Rodriques, NMFS Northeast Region, Gloucester, MA)*

HAWAII TUNA FISHERY

In 1990, commercial landings of tuna in Hawaii totaled 4,300 mt with an ex-vessel value of $23.8 million (Figures 3 and 4). This represents a 15% decrease from 1989 landings by weight and a 2% decrease in value. The decline in 1990 was due entirely to the decline in skipjack landings by the pole-and-line fleet; landings from the other fleets were stable or slightly up. Bigeye was the most important species landed, 1,800 mt valued at $12.9 million, followed by yellowfin, 1,700 mt valued at $7.9 million. The 1990 commercial fleet consisted of 138 longliners, 5 pole-and-line boats and

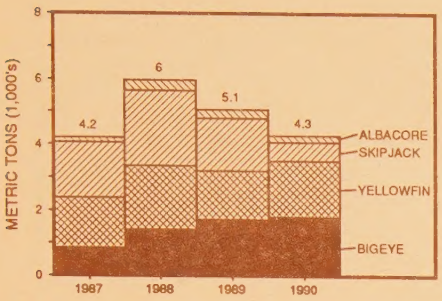

Figure 3. Commercial tuna landings in Hawaii, by species, for 1987 to 1990.

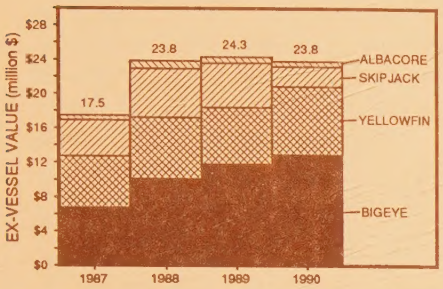

Figure 4. Ex-vessel value of tuna landings in Hawaii, by species, for 1987 to 1990.

approximately 500 trollers and handline vessels. *(Data provided by Samuel Pooley, NMFS Southwest Fisheries Science Center, Honolulu, HI)*

GULF OF MEXICO YELLOWFIN TUNA FISHERY

In 1990, 234 U.S. longliners landed 3,600 mt of yellowfin tuna in the Gulf of Mexico (Figure 5). Yellowfin landings for 1990 were down 37% from 1989, when 215 longliners landed 5,700 mt. *(Data provided by Guy Davenport, NMFS Southeast Fisheries Science Center, Miami, FL)*

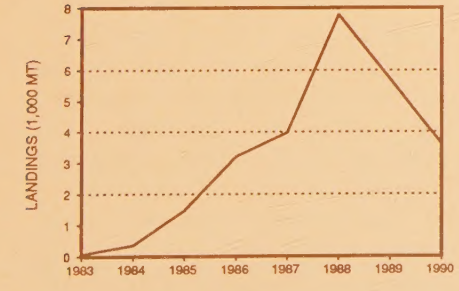

Figure 5. Annual yellowfin tuna landings by U.S. longliners in the Gulf of Mexico, 1983 to 1990.

Gary Rensink and Laura Halko, SWFSC, contributed to this article.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN TUNA FISHERIES

Editor's note: The following news items, compiled from fishery trade and industry journals, newspapers and NMFS reports, are provided only as a service to our readers. The NMFS does not guarantee their accuracy. (P. Kleiber)

UNITED STATES

Hawaii Longliners Faced with Further Restrictions--The Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council voted in March to create a "longline free zone" to prevent encounters between fishing gear and the endangered Hawaiian monk seal in Northwestern Hawaiian Islands, the seal's last refuge. The Council approved a 90-day emergency ban of all longlining within 50 nautical miles of the banks and islands in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands. The fishing ban went into effect April 1 and was to last through June, with a possible extension through September. The prohibition on longlining was prompted by a recent federal report stating that nine monk seals had been harmed or killed in recent months after tangling with longline gear. Present estimates put the seal population at approximately 1,200 animals. Fishery managers also recommended that the Secretary of Commerce extend for another three months a moratorium on entry into Hawaii's longline fishery. The Council is considering using December 5, 1991, as the cut-off date for the moratorium. The moratorium would effectively freeze the size of the state's longline fleet at 157 vessels. Council members, however, approved a measure that would exempt from the moratorium those longline vessels fishing beyond 200 miles that landed their catch in Hawaii. Between November and February, 154 permits for longline vessels operating within 200 miles of Hawaii were issued. More than two-thirds of those vessels are home ported in Honolulu. Their catch is made up of tuna, billfish and mahimahi. (*The Fishermen's News*, April 1991)

Forum Fisheries Agency-U.S. Talks Inconclusive--Talks between member governments of the Forum Fisheries Agency and the U.S. Government on the South Pacific Regional Tuna Treaty ended in Honiara, Solomon Islands, with no decisions made. The five-year Treaty ends in 1993. The U.S. wanted it to be succeeded by a 10-year term treaty and sought to increase the current 50 boat licenses allowed under the Treaty. Further talks will be held at the end of the year. (Forum Fisheries Agency, *News Digest*, May-June 1991)

EASTERN PACIFIC OCEAN

Mexican Dolphin Protection Program--The Mexican Secretariat of Fisheries (SEPESCA) published its long-awaited "National Program for the Exploitation of Tuna and the Protection of Dolphins" in the *Diario Oficial* on May 20, 1991. SEPESCA's basic goal is to develop a dolphin protection program that will not significantly reduce the country's tuna catch. The principal highlights of the plan are: (1) reduce dolphin mortalities at least 50% over the 1989-91 period; (2) establish an "experts committee" to evaluate the mortalities caused by each vessel; (3) take action against vessel captains reporting excessive mortalities; (4) set maximum allowable mortalities for each vessel; (5) require gear to be inspected every six months to reduce mortalities caused by equipment malfunctions. The

program does not specify goals as to mortalities per vessel or per set, nor does it mention a timetable for achieving 100% observer coverage. (NMFS Office of International Affairs, *Weekly Highlights*, May 27-31, 1991)

Mexico Argues Case of U.S. Tuna Embargo before GATT--Mexico's Ambassador to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade stated in an interview with Mexican fishing industry representatives that the only way to resolve the U.S. yellowfin tuna embargo is through GATT. Mexico formally asked the GATT Secretariat in February, 1991, to form a three-man Dispute Settlement Panel. Oral arguments were scheduled for May and the Panel could finish its report by August. (NMFS Office of International Affairs, *Weekly Highlights*, April 15-19, 1991)

Tuna Landings Encouraged at Cartagena--In an effort to attract tuna raw materials, the Colombian Government offers vessels operating out of Cartagena the following incentives: free fishing in Colombian Atlantic and Pacific territorial waters; fuel at 50% of the domestic rate; free use of loading, unloading and storage facilities; payment for tuna landed in U.S. dollars at international prices and an advance payment of up to $250,000 to vessels if the tuna is delivered to Cartagena where two loining operations are located. The only drawback appears to be the limited storage space in Cartagena. However, Colombia is determined to succeed with prospects enhanced by the preferential import duty rate into the European Community (EC). (INFOFISH, *Trade News*, June 17, 1991)

WESTERN PACIFIC OCEAN

South Pacific Albacore Tagging Program--The South Pacific Commission is conducting a South Pacific albacore tagging program. The project is designed to provide essential information on the population dynamics of albacore and the interaction of the various gear types used in the South Pacific. The aim is to tag troll-caught albacore in the Tasman Sea, in the New Zealand West Coast surface fishery, and in the subtropical convergence zone ranging from east of New Zealand to an area south of French Polynesia. Impetus to the project's development came from concern over the rapid increase in fishing by gillnetters from distant water fishing nations. However, several Pacific Island countries also have an active involvement in the albacore fishery, including American Samoa, the Cook Islands, French Polynesia, New Caledonia, Tonga and Vanuatu. Although driftnet operations in the coming season will all but cease, the driftnetting issue has highlighted the need for a better understanding of the fishery with its implication to all concerned. (South Pacific Commission, *Fisheries Newsletter*, January-March 1991)

South Korea Gets Access to French Polynesia EEZ--Fishing vessels from South Korea have been licensed by the French Government to operate within in the 200-mile exclusive economic zone (EEZ) of French Polynesia, New Caledonia and Wallis and Futuna. (INFOFISH, *Trade News*, May 15, 1991)

Papua New Guinea-Japan Negotiations Break Down--Negotiations for a fishing agreement between Papua New Guinea and Japan failed for the fifth time as the parties could not agree on the catch payments. Papua New Guinea negotiated for a fee of 6% of the value of each catch, while Japan only offered to pay 4%. (INFOFISH, *Trade News*, May 15, 1991)

Solomon Islands-Japan Fishing Agreement--The Solomon Islands Government signed a new agreement with the Japanese Tuna Association, licensing the Association's fishing vessels to operate within the Solomon Islands 200-mile EEZ. The annual catch is limited to 6,500 mt caught by longliners and 6,000 mt by pole-and-line. The agreement is expected to generate about $1 million, approximately $300,000 more than under the old agreement. Forum Fisheries Agency, *News Digest*, March-April 1991)

Papua New Guinea Reviewing All Existing Fishing Agreements--Papua New Guinea plans to close all its archipelagic waters to non-national vessels and will review all agreements with foreign companies currently permitted to fish within the country's EEZ. Fisheries Minister Akoka Doi, announcing the policy changes, said they were aimed at localizing the industry and forcing foreign operators to invest in onshore facilities. He described as "drastic" the measures he was instituting to encourage foreign companies to go into partnership with the local people, or invest in a domestic-based tuna processing industry. Companies which worked within these guidelines would be allowed tax exemptions on all fishing gear and fuel and a reduction in export taxes on all fish products. He said he wanted to demonstrate to foreign investors that his country was serious about establishing its own tuna industry. (*World Fishing*, April 1991)

Australia to Implement "Dolphin Safe" Measures--Australia has announced its intention to implement "dolphin safe" measures for canned tuna by next year. Once this law is enforced, all cans of tuna in Australia must carry a label saying that the contents are either "dolphin safe" or caught by a method that is not harmful to dolphins. (INFOFISH, *Trade News*, May 15, 1991)

Thai Company to Expand Operations in Germany--Unicord, the leading Thai tuna canner, plans to further expand its overseas tuna canning operations in the eastern

part of Germany. The company, with the help of the German Government, will can tuna using the Rostock-based herring canning factory it bought last year. In the absence of locally available raw materials, they will probably import tuna loins under the lower EC import duty to process canned tuna. (INFOFISH, *Trade News*, May 15, 1991)

Philippines Canned Tuna Given Preference--A memorandum of understanding was signed between Canada and the Philippines giving Philippine-canned tuna a preferential status by reducing import inspection of shipments to Canada. The new development is expected to improve Philippines tuna canners access to the Canadian market. (INFOFISH, *Trade News*, June 1, 1991)

U.N. Funds Tuna Plant in Vietnam--The United Nations Industrial Development Organization has funded the setting up of a continuous supply tuna and mackerel processing factory in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. The processing plant for the factory was supplied towards the end of last year by Cabinplant International A/S of Haarby, Denmark. The machinery includes cleaning and filleting lines, together with a semi-automatic continuous packing line combining high throughput per operator and easier quality control. Flexibility of operation will enable almost any type of produce to be packed into any type of container or can. (*Fishing News International*, April 1991)

INDIAN OCEAN

Indian Ocean Tuna Convention Signed--Nine Indian Ocean countries (the Comoros, India, Kenya, Madagascar, the Maldive Islands, Mauritius, Mozambique, the Seychelles and Sri Lanka) met in the Seychelles on June 17-19, 1991, to sign a convention creating a tuna organization. The organization was established to harmonize tuna fishing policies, promote the exchange of information (especially tuna catch statistics), coordinate projects and monitor fishing activities (especially by foreign fleets). (NMFS Office of International Affairs, *Weekly Highlights*, July 8-12, 1991)

EASTERN ATLANTIC OCEAN

Sierra Leone Fines French Tuna Vessel--The *Marsouin*, a French tuna seiner, was caught fishing illegally within the Sierra Leone EEZ on March 1, 1991. The vessel was carrying approximately 175 tons of yellowfin and skipjack tuna, worth about $300,000. The owners of the *Marsouin*, SCS Etablissements of Concarneau, France, reached an out-of-court settlement with the Government of Sierra Leone. By paying a fine of $600,000, equal to the value of the catch and the purse seine net, they had the vessel released. The Government of Sierra Leone would have been within its rights to confiscate the vessel, with its catch and gear, but decided to settle the case as a goodwill gesture toward the EC, with which it hopes to renegotiate a fisheries agreement. Since January, four vessels have been detained for violating the country's EEZ. (NMFS Office of International Affairs, *Weekly Highlights*, April 29-May 3, 1991)

Trawling for Albacore in Eastern Atlantic Takes Off--Midwater pair trawling for albacore tuna in the eastern Atlantic is now established, following the pioneering work of French skippers aided by the research organization Ifremer and gear suppliers. This fishery is attracting considerable interest in the United Kingdom and Ireland following the success of the French and the encouraging netting and trawling trials carried out by the Irish last year. Information from Pierre-Louis le Brun, a director of the French netmaking firm Le Drezen, shows the driftnet season runs from June to August with midwater trawls being used from August to November. Catch rates of the French tuna trawlers range from one to five tons per team per day and pair teams of 20-25 meter boats of 450-700 horsepower are able to land 200 tons of tuna within a three-month season.

The first attempts to take tuna by pelagic trawl were by the 50-meter French vessels *Aubisque* and *Drakkar* in 1977, but the results were poor because only 10 hauls were made in one month. It was 10 years later before good catches began to be made by much smaller French vessels. Last year, some 35 to 40 French pair trawlers, 50 gillnetters and 15 longliners took part in the albacore fishery. Albacore comprises about 90% of the catch with bluefin tuna, bigeye tuna, swordfish, sharks and moonfish forming the rest. (*Fishing News*, April 12, 1991)

British Company Labels Tuna Products "Dolphin Friendly"--To advertise that all the tuna it uses is caught by methods which are not

1991 TUNA MEETINGS

(Organizer; meeting type: sci=science, adm=administration)

- OCT 7-12. Indian Ocean Yellowfin Tuna Workshop. Colombo, Sri Lanka. (Indo-Pacific Tuna Programme; sci)
- OCT 28-NOV 1. International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT), Standing Committee on Research and Statistics meeting. Madrid, Spain. (ICCAT; sci)
- NOV 11-15. ICCAT Commission Meeting. Madrid, Spain. (ICCAT; adm)

harmful to marine mammals, the British company Princes indicates "dolphin friendly" on all its production of tuna. This policy follows a meeting between the British Association of Importers and Distributors of Canned Products and the Society for Conservation of Whales and Dolphins. (INFOFISH, *Trade News*, May 15, 1991)

WESTERN ATLANTIC OCEAN

Brazil-Venezuela Fishing Agreement—A letter of intent has been signed with Venezuela allowing Venezuelan tuna fleet access to Brazilian territorial waters under the following conditions and benefits: Vessels should leave 50% of their catch in Brazil; tuna landed will be paid according to international price in U.S. dollars; Brazil offers soft credit and free sites to those companies wishing to set up installations in the country. (INFOFISH, *Trade News*, June 17, 1991)

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